

FEBRUARY 18, 1993

President Clinton's bad luck in nominating attorney generals guilty of hiring illegal immigrants for nursemaids has revived how bad we all feel in the Shortgrass Country about once working so many unpapered aliens out of Mexico. Unlike the tow scorned nominees in Washington, our disgrace goes way back into our history.

Lots of Shortgrassers are double bred wet Mexican users. Grandpas on both sides of the family probably herded their first flock of sheep with hombres who thought wading the Rio Grande at low level was enough legal procedure to enter the country.

Clearing up the records on domestic help for a big family like mine goes further that the threat of a Senate investigation, or the fanfare of an unfriendly press. The old account books tell how many Mexican cowboys were terminated by Border Patrol raids. But identifying all the babysitters and house maids during the childhoods of my eight kids would take the full force of the U.S. Customs office from Del Rio, Texas down the Laredo, plus the added support of the police departments on both sides of the border.

Recollections run like this: "Juana, for the sake of all the patron saints of Mexico and all the goodness your sweet mother taught you on her lap, please don't leave until my wife comes home from the hospital. By then, we'll have our next to the youngest potty trained and working around here will be a snap."

Not, "Juana, the most important thing is to see a copy of your birth certificate and proof of a valid passport, so if I die from rocking chair vertigo and drowned flesh from washing bottles and rinsing diapers, the Judiciary Committee of the Senate won't order that I be buried in an unmarked grave." The truth is at peak production, with an appointment to Chief Justice pending, we'd of hired a momma orangutan from Southern Borneo if she'd of been staked on a stout enough chain to gentle her down.

Mrs. Baird, the first nominee, testified that the Peruvian aliens were hired by her husband on a summer he was off from work. Blaming her husband was a lousy excuse, but has the Judiciary Committee thought what happens leaving a kid with his daddy on vacation, they'd of researched the influence of golf courses and snooker games on young minds and been more understanding.

I think if she'd of made a pitch based on avoiding bed influence for her baby, and tearfully pled she'd exhausted all the babysitting services from Georgetown to the northern perimeters of D.C., she'd have a staff of civil service employees to keep her child today.

Nominees for Mr. Clinton's cabinet may be able to produce the records for all the high school girls and widow ladies and papered and unpapered senoras who spent New Year's Eve in 1986 with their children. But tracing down the ones who loose herded my tribe would take all the snoopers in the greater Washington area and a hotline to Mexico City just to verify the spelling of the names.

If working unprocessed aliens contributed moral deficiency, the Shortgrass Country is a wasteland for sure. Much more of this kind of nonsense is going to make attorney general prospects as hard to find as good babysitters.

Old coots, like the Senators on the high and mighty committee, need to spend a few nights sleeping in 15-minute snatches, growing so hoarse from singing rock-a-by-baby that their throats are raw as fish monger's catch.

Were life to be lived over, however, being attorney general of these United States might not be worth having has a good live-in nanny at exactly the right period of time.